

The Acts of the Apostles

The Journey – 2020
Jim Hoffman

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48 AD	The Council at Jerusalem	Acts 15
49 AD	Paul's Second Missionary Journey	Acts 15:36
49 AD	Paul in Philippi	Acts 16
49 AD	Paul in Thessalonica, Berea, Athens	Acts 17
51 AD	Paul in Corinth	Acts 18
54 AD	Paul in Ephesus	Acts 19
57 AD	Paul in Macedonia and Greece	Acts 20
59 AD	Paul Returns to Jerusalem	Acts 21 - 23
60 AD	Paul imprisoned in Caesarea	Acts 24
62 AD	Paul Before Festus	Acts 25
62 AD	Paul Before Agrippa	Acts 26
62 AD	Paul Sails for Rome	Acts 27
62 AD	The Shipwreck	Acts 27:13
62 AD	Paul Ashore at Malta	Acts 28
62 AD	Paul Preaches at Rome	Acts 28:11

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The Acts of the Apostles

• Acts 25:1 Three days after Festus arrived in Caesarea to take over his new responsibilities, he left for Jerusalem, 2 where the leading priests and other Jewish leaders met with him and made their accusations against Paul. 3 They asked Festus as a favor to transfer Paul to Jerusalem (planning to ambush and kill him on the way). 4 But Festus replied that Paul was at Caesarea and he himself would be returning there soon. 5 So he said, "Those of you in authority can return with me. If Paul has done anything wrong, you can make your accusations." 6 About eight or ten days later Festus returned to Caesarea, and on the following day he took his seat in court and ordered that Paul be brought in. 7 When Paul arrived, the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem gathered around and made many serious accusations they couldn't prove. NLT

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• Remember what happened at the end of chapter 24? Felix leaves town and while he could have freed Paul, he decided to do the Jews a favor and keep him confined.

• "Three days after Festus arrived in Caesarea to take over his new responsibilities, he left for Jerusalem, 2 where the leading priests and other Jewish leaders met with him and made their accusations against Paul."

• And, true to form, the Jews are waiting to pounce, probably thinking they can gain ground on the new guy.

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• "They asked Festus as a favor to transfer Paul to Jerusalem (planning to ambush and kill him on the way)."

• The Jews' first move is to try to get Festus to transfer Paul back to Jerusalem, not to litigate his case, but to ambush him on the way.

• Do these "religious leaders" sound anything at all like godly people with good intentions?

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Never assume the religious are even well intentioned, let alone godly.

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- Let's digress for a moment and understand just who Festus was – as it turns out he was no where near as interesting as Felix, but he was a better governor.
- Historians describe Festus as a rather plain vanilla governor of Judea – he was a pragmatist who was a “by the book” sort of guy.
- This attribute of his personality would serve Paul well. Again, we will see the providence of God at work.

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- **But Festus replied that Paul was at Caesarea and he himself would be returning there soon. 5 So he said, “Those of you in authority can return with me. If Paul has done anything wrong, you can make your accusations.”**
- Since Festus was a by the books ruler he needed no special insight from God into the plan of the Jews.
- His “by the books” approach is why God providentially had him named as the next governor of Judea. ☺

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- “About eight or ten days later Festus returned to Caesarea, and on the following day he took his seat in court and ordered that Paul be brought in. 7 When Paul arrived, the Jewish leaders from Jerusalem gathered around and made many serious accusations they couldn’t prove.”
- They all get back to Caesarea and the very next day Festus has Paul and his accusers back in court – and back to the same old false and unprovable accusations.

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- Here is Paul’s face as the Jews put on their same old tired and false accusations – surely he rolled his eyes.



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- Acts 25:8 Paul denied the charges. “I am not guilty of any crime against the Jewish laws or the Temple or the Roman government,” he said. 9 Then Festus, wanting to please the Jews, asked him, “Are you willing to go to Jerusalem and stand trial before me there?” 10 But Paul replied, “No! This is the official Roman court, so I ought to be tried right here. You know very well I am not guilty of harming the Jews. 11 If I have done something worthy of death, I don’t refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me. I appeal to Caesar!” 12 Festus conferred with his advisers and then replied, “Very well! You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you will go!” NLT

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- Paul asserts his innocence again and demands his case be heard right there in Caesarea instead of back in Jerusalem.
- And then Paul drops a bombshell of sorts – he seems to know intuitively that Festus himself knew the Jews were railroading him.
- ““No! This is the official Roman court, so I ought to be tried right here. **You know very well I am not guilty of harming the Jews.**”

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- **If I have done something worthy of death, I don't refuse to die. But if I am innocent, no one has a right to turn me over to these men to kill me. I appeal to Caesar!" 12 Festus conferred with his advisers and then replied, "Very well! You have appealed to Caesar, and to Caesar you will go!"**
- Paul makes it plain that he has had it with the false charges and show trials that go no where and demands what every Roman citizen could demand, to have his case heard by Caesar himself.

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- He will have to stand before a terrible tyrant, Caesar Nero, but evidently, he wants closure and freedom to get back to his work.
- And then it probably hit him – I am going to Rome!
- **Romans 1:13 I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, that I planned many times to visit you, but I was prevented until now. I want to work among you and see spiritual fruit, just as I have seen among other Gentiles. 14 For I have a great sense of obligation to people in both the civilized world and the rest of the world, to the educated and uneducated alike. 15 So I am eager to come to you in Rome, too, to preach the Good News. NLT (AD 57)**

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• Acts 25:13 A few days later King Agrippa arrived with his sister, Bernice, to pay their respects to Festus. 14 During their stay of several days, Festus discussed Paul's case with the king. "There is a prisoner here," he told him, "whose case was left for me by Felix. 15 When I was in Jerusalem, the leading priests and Jewish elders pressed charges against him and asked me to condemn him. 16 I pointed out to them that Roman law does not convict people without a trial. They must be given an opportunity to confront their accusers and defend themselves. 17 "When his accusers came here for the trial, I didn't delay. I called the case the very next day and ordered Paul brought in. 18 But the accusations made against him weren't any of the crimes I expected. 19 Instead, it was something about their religion and a dead man named Jesus, who Paul insists is alive. 20 I was at a loss to know how to investigate these things, so I asked him whether he would be willing to stand trial on these charges in Jerusalem. 21 But Paul appealed to have his case decided by the emperor. So I ordered that he be held in custody until I could arrange to send him to Caesar." 22 "I'd like to hear the man myself," Agrippa said. And Festus replied, "You will—tomorrow!" NLT

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- "A few days later King Agrippa arrived with his sister, Bernice, to pay their respects to Festus."
- Okay, since Festus was so boring, the Lord must have thought we needed some additional "Felix like" flare in a new character, King Agrippa.
- Bernice, is the sister of Drusilla who was married to Felix, she is mentioned 3 times in the new testament and each time she is with King Agrippa II.

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- In fact it would be easy to conclude that Bernice was the wife of King Agrippa II, but she was his sister.
- There is no doubt in the mind of historians that Bernice and her brother Agrippa were lovers – what is also true is that Bernice's real husband was her uncle Herod Antipas who had John the Baptist beheaded.
- To say that the Herod family, from Herod the Great to Herod Agrippa here in chapter 25 were immoral, power grabbing, murderous thugs would be to state the obvious.

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- Acts 25:23 So the next day Agrippa and Bernice arrived at the auditorium with great pomp, accompanied by military officers and prominent men of the city. Festus ordered that Paul be brought in. 24 Then Festus said, "King Agrippa and all who are here, this is the man whose death is demanded by all the Jews, both here and in Jerusalem. 25 But in my opinion he has done nothing deserving death. However, since he appealed his case to the emperor, I have decided to send him to Rome. 26 "But what shall I write the emperor? For there is no clear charge against him. So I have brought him before all of you, and especially you, King Agrippa, so that after we examine him, I might have something to write. 27 For it makes no sense to send a prisoner to the emperor without specifying the charges against him!" NLT

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- True to his "by the book" form Festus is methodically working to clear the backlog of cases left to him by Felix.
- He knows he has to send Paul to Caesar, but doesn't want to appear incompetent by having Paul stand before Nero without specific charges against him.
- If he wrote to Nero, "I am sending Paul to you because both me and my predecessor Felix were too spineless to set him free" that would not go well for him. 😊

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- Acts 26:1 Then Agrippa said to Paul, "You may speak in your defense." So Paul, gesturing with his hand, started his defense: 2 "I am fortunate, King Agrippa, that you are the one hearing my defense today against all these accusations made by the Jewish leaders, 3 for I know you are an expert on all Jewish customs and controversies. Now please listen to me patiently! 4 "As the Jewish leaders are well aware, I was given a thorough Jewish training from my earliest childhood among my own people and in Jerusalem. 5 If they would admit it, they know that I have been a member of the Pharisees, the strictest sect of our religion. 6 Now I am on trial because of my hope in the fulfillment of God's promise made to our ancestors. 7 In fact, that is why the twelve tribes of Israel zealously worship God night and day, and they share the same hope I have. Yet, Your Majesty, they accuse me for having this hope! 8 Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead? NLT

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Why does it seem incredible to any of you that God can raise the dead?

I think Paul asked this question specifically because they did doubt it and probably tried hard not to think about it.

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- Acts 26:9 “I used to believe that I ought to do everything I could to oppose the very name of Jesus the Nazarene. 10 Indeed, I did just that in Jerusalem. Authorized by the leading priests, I caused many believers there to be sent to prison. And I cast my vote against them when they were condemned to death. 11 Many times I had them punished in the synagogues to get them to curse Jesus. I was so violently opposed to them that I even chased them down in foreign cities. 12 “One day I was on such a mission to Damascus, armed with the authority and commission of the leading priests. 13 About noon, Your Majesty, as I was on the road, a light from heaven brighter than the sun shone down on me and my companions. 14 We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will. NLT

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- **We all fell down, and I heard a voice saying to me in Aramaic, “Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? It is useless for you to fight against my will.”**
- There are 3 wills of God:
 - God’s perfect will for you. (behaviors and career)
 - God’s proscribed will for all. (behaviors)
 - God’s predetermined will. (the plan of God)

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- Acts 26:15 “Who are you, lord?” I asked. “And the Lord replied, ‘I am Jesus, the one you are persecuting. 16 Now get to your feet! For I have appeared to you to appoint you as my servant and witness. Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. 17 And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles. Yes, I am sending you to the Gentiles 18 to open their eyes, so they may turn from darkness to light and from the power of Satan to God. Then they will receive forgiveness for their sins and be given a place among God’s people, who are set apart by faith in me.’ NLT

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- **“Tell people that you have seen me, and tell them what I will show you in the future. And I will rescue you from both your own people and the Gentiles.”** NLT
- **Mission #1** – Testify that you have witnessed the resurrected Christ.
- **Mission #2** – Tell (and write) all that I will show you in the future.

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- Acts 26:19 “And so, King Agrippa, I obeyed that vision from heaven. 20 I preached first to those in Damascus, then in Jerusalem and throughout all Judea, and also to the Gentiles, that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do. 21 Some Jews arrested me in the Temple for preaching this, and they tried to kill me. 22 But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can testify to everyone, from the least to the greatest. I teach nothing except what the prophets and Moses said would happen— 23 that the Messiah would suffer and be the first to rise from the dead, and in this way announce God’s light to Jews and Gentiles alike.” 24 Suddenly, Festus shouted, “Paul, you are insane. Too much study has made you crazy!” 25 But Paul replied, “I am not insane, Most Excellent Festus. What I am saying is the sober truth. 26 And King Agrippa knows about these things. I speak boldly, for I am sure these events are all familiar to him, for they were not done in a corner! 27 King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know you do—” NLT

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- Acts 26:20 ***“that all must repent of their sins and turn to God—and prove they have changed by the good things they do.”*** NLT
- Acts 20:21 I have had one message for Jews and Greeks alike—the necessity of repenting from sin and turning to God, **and** of having faith in our Lord Jesus.
- Paul’s message was one of evangelism followed by holy living as the proof their faith was genuine.

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- Acts 26:28 Agrippa interrupted him. “Do you think you can persuade me to become a Christian so quickly?” 29 Paul replied, “Whether quickly or not, I pray to God that both you and everyone here in this audience might become the same as I am, except for these chains.” 30 Then the king, the governor, Bernice, and all the others stood and left. 31 As they went out, they talked it over and agreed, “This man hasn’t done anything to deserve death or imprisonment.” 32 And Agrippa said to Festus, “He could have been set free if he hadn’t appealed to Caesar.” NLT

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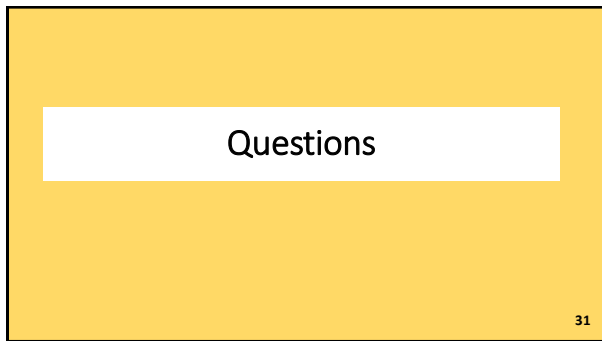
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- **And Agrippa said to Festus, “He could have been set free if he hadn’t appealed to Caesar.”** NLT
- Felix could have left Paul go free and so could have Festus, but they didn’t.
- Because God was providentially moving Paul to Rome, the center of the known world where he would preach the gospel as desired by God.

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